

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for delivering media objects across a communication network comprising multiple edge server computers controllably connected to client computers and at least one origin server computer, the method comprising the steps of:
 - storing said media object on said origin server computer;
 - storing a prefix on at least one edge server computer, said prefix comprising a beginning portion of said media object;
 - transmitting said prefix from said edge server computer to at least one client computer;
 - transmitting said media object from said origin server computer to said edge computers in response to said transmitting of said prefix to said client computers; and
 - transmitting to said client computers said media object subsequent to said prefix such that transmission of said prefix and said media object is delivered to said client computers without interruption.
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said media object is transmitted from said origin server computer to said edge server computer in parallel.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said prefix is distributed to said edge server computer based on anticipated demand.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said prefix is distributed to said edge server computer based on measured usage.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said prefix is distributed to said edge server computer based on a connection between said origin server computer and said edge server computer.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein said media object is referenced by a URL.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said user requests delivery of said media object by selecting said URL.

8. A method of streaming media objects over a computer network to a user, the network having at least one origin server and at least one edge server, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a user request for deliver of a media object;

if the media object is fully stored on the edge server, then streaming the media object to the user;

if the media object is partially stored on the edge server, then streaming a prefix of the media object to the user while simultaneously fetching the suffix of the media

object from the origin server, then streaming the suffix such that no interruption in streaming occurs between streaming the prefix and streaming the suffix; and

if the media object is not stored on the edge server, fetching a sufficient portion of the media object, then begin streaming the sufficient portion while the remaining portion of the media object is fetched, and streaming the remaining portion after the sufficient portion has been streamed such that no interruption in streaming occurs between streaming the sufficient portion and streaming the remaining portion.

9. A computer program product for delivering media objects across a communication network comprising multiple edge server computers controllably connected to client computers and at least one origin server computer, said computer program product, when executed on a computer, performing the steps of:

storing said media object on said origin server computer;

transmitting a prefix of said media object to said at least one edge server computer, said prefix containing a beginning portion of said media object;

receiving a delivery request from said edge server computer for transmission of the remaining portion of said media object associated with said prefix; and

transmitting said remaining portion to said edge server computer in response to said delivery request, said remaining portion delivered subsequent to said prefix without interruption or delay.

10. A computer program product for delivering media objects across a communication network comprising multiple edge server computers controllably connected to client computers and at least one origin server computer, the computer program product, when executed on a computer, performing the steps of:

5 storing a prefix, said prefix comprising a beginning portion of said media object;
receiving a request from said client computer for delivery of said media object;
transmitting said prefix to said client computer in response to said delivery
request;
receiving remaining portion of said media object associated with said prefix; and
10 transmit said media object to said client computer such that delivery of the prefix
is followed by delivery of the media object without interruption or delay.

11. A computer program product for streaming media objects over a computer network to a user, the network having at least one origin server and at least one edge server, the computer program product, when executed on a computer, performing the steps of:

receiving a user request for deliver of a media object;
if the media object is fully stored on the edge server, then streaming the media
object to the user;

if the media object is partially stored on the edge server, then streaming a prefix of the media object to the user while simultaneously fetching the suffix of the media object from the origin server, then streaming the suffix such that no interruption in streaming occurs between streaming the prefix and streaming the suffix; and

if the media object is not stored on the edge server, fetching a sufficient portion of the media object, then begin streaming the sufficient portion while the remaining portion of the media object is fetched, and streaming the remaining portion after the sufficient portion has been streamed such that no interruption in streaming occurs between streaming the sufficient portion and streaming the remaining portion.

12. A computer system for delivering media objects to a client computer, said computer system comprising:

at least one origin server computer, said origin server computer storing at least one media object;

at least one edge server computer, said edge server computer storing a prefix of said media object, said prefix containing a beginning portion of said media object, said edge server computer in communication with said origin server computer, said client computer issuing to said edge server computer a request for delivery of said media object, said origin computer transmitting said media object associated with said first portion to said edge server computer, said edge server computer subsequently

transmitting said media object associated with said first portion to said client computer such that delivery of the first portion and said subsequently transmitted media object is continuous and uninterrupted.

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13. The computer system of Claim 12, wherein said origin server computer contains said media object in multiple file formats.

14. The computer system of Claim 12, further including a media streaming module.

15. The computer system of Claim 12, further including a media management module.

16. The computer system of Claim 12, further including a media distribution module.

17. The computer system of Claim 14, wherein said media streaming module, media management module, and media distribution module are included in said origin server computer.

18. The computer system of Claim 17, wherein said media streaming module, media management module, and media distribution module are included in said edge server computer.

FOOTNOTES